level 1 sommelier exam

Level 1 Sommelier Exam: Your Gateway to the World of Wine

level 1 sommelier exam is often the first step for anyone passionate about wine and eager to establish a solid foundation in wine knowledge and service. Whether you are an aspiring wine professional or simply a wine enthusiast keen to deepen your understanding, the Level 1 Sommelier Exam offers a structured and comprehensive introduction to the fascinating world of wine. This exam is not just about memorizing grape varieties or wine regions; it's about developing a practical skill set that will help you appreciate, select, and serve wine with confidence.

What is the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

The Level 1 Sommelier Exam is typically the introductory certification offered by various sommelier organizations worldwide. Its primary goal is to ensure that candidates grasp essential wine knowledge and acquire basic service skills. Unlike advanced sommelier exams that demand expert-level expertise, the Level 1 certification focuses on foundational topics such as wine styles, grape varieties, wine production, and basic tasting techniques.

Taking the Level 1 Sommelier Exam is a credible way to prove your commitment to learning about wine professionally. Many hospitality businesses value this certification, as it demonstrates that employees have a working knowledge of wine and can contribute to enhancing the customer experience.

Why Take the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

For many, the motivation to take the Level 1 Sommelier Exam stems from a desire to improve their wine literacy. But beyond that, this exam opens doors in the food and beverage industry, particularly in roles such as waitstaff, bartenders, restaurant managers, and wine sales professionals.

Building a Strong Foundation

The exam covers topics like:

- Basic wine terminology
- Overview of major wine regions around the world
- Introduction to grape varieties and wine styles
- Fundamentals of wine tasting and sensory evaluation
- Basic wine and food pairing principles
- Proper wine service techniques

This knowledge equips candidates with the confidence to recommend wines appropriately and handle wine service professionally.

Career Advancement Opportunities

Achieving the Level 1 Sommelier certification can be a stepping stone for career growth in the hospitality sector. It can enhance your resume, set you apart from competitors, and even lead to higher-paying positions or specialized roles such as beverage director or certified sommelier.

What to Expect in the Level 1 Sommelier Exam

The structure of the exam varies depending on the certifying body, but generally, it comprises both theoretical and practical components.

Theoretical Component

This part typically includes multiple-choice or short-answer questions that test your knowledge of wine basics. You will be expected to identify grape varieties, match wines to regions, and understand winemaking processes. Some exams also include questions about spirits, beer, and other beverages to provide a well-rounded foundation.

Practical Component

Practical skills are equally important. The exam may require candidates to demonstrate proper wine service, including decanting, opening a bottle, and pouring. Some versions include a blind tasting section, where candidates assess wine characteristics such as acidity, body, and flavor profile.

Tips to Prepare for the Level 1 Sommelier Exam

Preparation is key to passing the Level 1 Sommelier Exam with confidence. Here are some strategies to help you get ready:

Study the Core Material Thoroughly

Focus on understanding the basics rather than memorizing facts. Use reputable study guides, textbooks, and online resources that cover world wine regions, grape varieties, and wine production methods. Familiarize yourself with wine vocabulary and tasting terminology.

Practice Wine Tasting Regularly

Develop your palate by tasting a variety of wines. Take notes on aromas, flavors, acidity, tannins, and

body. Learning to identify these elements will improve your sensory skills, which are essential for both the exam and real-world applications.

Gain Hands-On Experience with Wine Service

If possible, practice serving wine in a restaurant or at events. Understand the correct etiquette for presenting, opening, and pouring wine. This practical experience will make the service portion of the exam much less intimidating.

Join Study Groups or Classes

Many organizations offer prep courses specifically designed for the Level 1 Sommelier Exam. Participating in these classes allows you to learn from experts, ask questions, and meet others with similar goals.

Understanding the Benefits Beyond Certification

While passing the Level 1 Sommelier Exam is a fantastic achievement, the benefits extend far beyond the certificate itself.

Enhanced Appreciation of Wine

By studying for the exam, you cultivate a deeper appreciation for the complexities of wine — from terroir influences to winemaking styles. This enriched understanding can transform your personal enjoyment and broaden your social and cultural experiences.

Improved Customer Interaction

For those in hospitality, this certification helps enhance communication with customers. Being able to confidently recommend wines and explain their characteristics improves customer satisfaction and can increase sales.

Pathway to Advanced Certifications

The Level 1 Sommelier Exam often serves as the first step toward more advanced certifications like Level 2, Certified Sommelier, or Master Sommelier. It lays the groundwork for continued learning and specialization in areas like spirits, sake, or beer.

Choosing the Right Certification Program

Several organizations offer Level 1 Sommelier certifications, each with its unique approach and reputation. Some of the most recognized include:

- The Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS): Known for its rigorous standards and industry prestige.
- Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET): Offers structured courses with a global presence, focusing on wine and spirits education.
- **International Sommelier Guild (ISG):** Provides flexible learning options and comprehensive training programs.

When selecting a program, consider your career goals, learning style, and the credibility of the certification within your local or desired market.

Final Thoughts on the Level 1 Sommelier Exam

Embarking on the journey to become a certified sommelier begins with the Level 1 Sommelier Exam—a practical and approachable way to immerse yourself in the world of wine. Beyond the exam itself, the experience enriches your knowledge, enhances your sensory skills, and opens doors to exciting career opportunities. Whether you aspire to work in fine dining, wine retail, or simply want to impress friends with your wine expertise, this certification is a valuable first step worth pursuing. Remember, wine is as much about passion and enjoyment as it is about knowledge, and the Level 1 Sommelier Exam helps you blend both seamlessly.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

The Level 1 Sommelier Exam is an introductory certification offered by the Court of Master Sommeliers designed to test basic knowledge of wine, service skills, and beverage theory.

Who should take the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

The exam is ideal for hospitality professionals, wine enthusiasts, and those starting a career in the wine and beverage industry who want foundational knowledge and certification.

What topics are covered in the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

The exam covers wine regions, grape varieties, wine tasting, basic service procedures, beverage

knowledge, and introductory wine theory.

How is the Level 1 Sommelier Exam structured?

The exam typically includes a multiple-choice written test and a practical service component where candidates demonstrate basic wine service skills.

How can I prepare for the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

Preparation includes studying Court of Master Sommeliers materials, attending classes or workshops, practicing wine tasting, and understanding basic service techniques.

What is the passing score for the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

Candidates generally must achieve a score of 75% or higher on the written portion and demonstrate competence in the practical service exam to pass.

How much does the Level 1 Sommelier Exam cost?

The exam fee varies but typically ranges between \$200 to \$300, depending on location and course providers.

Can I retake the Level 1 Sommelier Exam if I fail?

Yes, candidates who do not pass can retake the exam after a waiting period, which is usually a few months according to the Court of Master Sommeliers policies.

What certification do I receive after passing the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

Upon passing, candidates receive the Introductory Sommelier Certificate from the Court of Master Sommeliers, which is recognized globally.

What are the next steps after passing the Level 1 Sommelier Exam?

After passing Level 1, candidates often pursue the Level 2 Certified Sommelier Exam to deepen their knowledge and advance their sommelier career.

Additional Resources

Level 1 Sommelier Exam: An In-Depth Look at the Gateway to Wine Expertise

level 1 sommelier exam represents the foundational step for aspiring wine professionals and enthusiasts eager to formalize their knowledge about wine, service, and tasting. As the entry-level certification offered by prestigious sommelier organizations such as the Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS) and the International Sommelier Guild (ISG), this exam serves as both an introduction and a

benchmark to assess one's grasp of essential wine concepts. Understanding the structure, content, and significance of the level 1 sommelier exam is crucial for candidates aiming to build a credible career or deepen their appreciation of wine.

Understanding the Purpose of the Level 1 Sommelier Exam

The level 1 sommelier exam is designed to assess candidates on fundamental wine knowledge and basic service skills. Unlike advanced sommelier certifications that dive deeply into complex wine regions, grape varieties, and blind tasting techniques, the level 1 exam focuses on creating a solid foundation. It is often regarded as the first formal step for individuals working in hospitality, retail wine sales, or those simply passionate about wine.

This exam aims to:

- Validate understanding of wine types, grape varieties, and production methods.
- Familiarize candidates with proper wine service etiquette and glassware handling.
- Introduce basic tasting techniques to discern primary wine characteristics.
- Encourage awareness of food and wine pairing fundamentals.

By mastering these elements, candidates can confidently interact with customers, peers, and suppliers, enhancing their professional credibility.

Exam Structure and Content Breakdown

While the exact format of the level 1 sommelier exam varies slightly between organizations, the core components remain consistent. Typically, the exam consists of a written theory test coupled with a practical service evaluation, sometimes complemented by a tasting segment.

Theory Component

The written portion usually tests knowledge in key areas such as:

- Wine regions and appellations worldwide (e.g., Bordeaux, Napa Valley, Rioja).
- Grape varieties and their distinctive profiles (e.g., Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay).

- Basic wine production processes including fermentation and aging.
- Wine storage and serving temperatures.
- Fundamental food and wine pairing principles.

The questions tend to be multiple-choice or short-answer format, designed to evaluate comprehension rather than in-depth analysis.

Practical Service Evaluation

Beyond theory, sommelier skills require practical application. The service segment typically assesses:

- Proper presentation and opening of a bottle of wine.
- Correct pouring techniques and glassware usage.
- Interaction with customers, including answering basic wine-related queries.
- Demonstrating hygiene and professionalism in service.

This hands-on approach ensures candidates not only know the facts but can also perform suitably in a real-world hospitality environment.

Tasting Component

Some level 1 sommelier exams include a basic tasting evaluation where candidates are expected to identify:

- Primary aromas and flavors (fruit, floral, earthy notes).
- Basic structural elements such as acidity, tannins, and sweetness.
- Wine style classifications (e.g., dry vs. sweet, still vs. sparkling).

This segment is introductory in nature, designed to cultivate sensory awareness rather than expert blind tasting skills.

Comparing Level 1 Sommelier Exams Across Organizations

Two of the most recognized institutions offering level 1 sommelier certification are the Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS) and the International Sommelier Guild (ISG). Though the objectives align, variations in exam focus and difficulty can influence a candidate's choice.

Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS) - Introductory Sommelier Course & Exam

CMS's level 1 offering is often called the Introductory Sommelier Course and Exam. It emphasizes:

- Foundational wine knowledge and tasting techniques.
- Service standards aligned with fine dining establishments.
- A rigorous practical service test.

CMS certifications are highly respected globally, making their level 1 exam a valuable credential for those pursuing a sommelier career.

International Sommelier Guild (ISG) - Level 1 Certification

ISG's level 1 certification focuses on:

- Comprehensive wine knowledge with a strong educational approach.
- Emphasis on food and beverage pairing principles.
- Accessible for hospitality professionals and enthusiasts alike.

ISG is known for its structured curriculum and supportive training environment, often appealing to beginners.

Pros and Cons of Attempting the Level 1 Sommelier

Exam

Like any certification, the level 1 sommelier exam offers distinct advantages and potential drawbacks that candidates should consider.

Pros

- **Recognition:** Provides a credible, industry-recognized credential.
- **Foundation:** Builds a strong base for further sommelier education.
- Career Advancement: Enhances employability in hospitality and wine retail sectors.
- **Confidence:** Improves wine knowledge and service confidence for customer interactions.
- Networking: Access to professional sommelier communities and resources.

Cons

- **Cost:** Exam fees and preparatory courses can be expensive for some candidates.
- **Time Commitment:** Requires dedicated study and practice, which may be challenging for busy professionals.
- **Limited Depth:** As an entry-level exam, it may not satisfy those seeking advanced expertise immediately.
- **Pressure:** The practical service component can be intimidating for newcomers.

Preparation Strategies for Success

Success on the level 1 sommelier exam depends largely on structured preparation. Candidates are advised to:

- 1. **Enroll in Recognized Training Programs:** Formal courses offered by CMS, ISG, or other accredited bodies provide comprehensive guidance.
- 2. Study Wine Regions and Varietals: Focus on memorizing key characteristics of major wine-

producing areas and grape types.

- 3. **Practice Service Skills:** Role-play bottle presentation, opening, and pouring to build confidence.
- 4. **Develop Sensory Acuity:** Regular tasting sessions help identify aromas and flavors.
- Use Study Materials and Mock Exams: Workbooks, flashcards, and practice tests reinforce learning.

Incorporating these strategies into a consistent study routine can greatly increase the likelihood of passing the exam on the first attempt.

The Role of the Level 1 Sommelier Exam in Career Progression

While the level 1 sommelier exam is introductory, it plays a pivotal role in career trajectories within the wine and hospitality industries. For many, it acts as a gateway to more advanced certifications such as the Certified Sommelier (Level 2) and Advanced Sommelier levels. Employers often recognize level 1 certification as a marker of professionalism and commitment, setting candidates apart in competitive job markets.

Moreover, level 1 certification can empower restaurant staff to provide enhanced guest experiences, contributing to better wine sales and customer satisfaction. For wine retailers, possessing this credential improves the ability to recommend wines with authority, driving business growth.

Emerging Trends and Future Outlook

The sommelier profession continues to evolve, with increasing interest in sustainability, natural wines, and diverse wine regions. Future iterations of the level 1 sommelier exam may incorporate these trends, emphasizing environmental awareness and broader cultural contexts. Additionally, digital learning platforms and virtual tastings are becoming integral to exam preparation, making the certification more accessible worldwide.

As the global wine market grows, the demand for knowledgeable professionals at all levels, starting with the level 1 sommelier exam, is expected to rise. This growing ecosystem benefits candidates who invest early in their sommelier education.

In essence, the level 1 sommelier exam provides a crucial stepping stone for individuals seeking to immerse themselves in the world of wine. Its balanced focus on theory, service, and tasting equips candidates with practical skills and knowledge that resonate beyond the exam room, influencing careers and personal appreciation alike.

Level 1 Sommelier Exam

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level 1 sommelier exam: HOW TO BECOME A GOOD SOMMELIER DAVID SANDUA, How to Become a Good Sommelier is a comprehensive guide that provides a deep insight into the culture and nuances of wine. This book not only offers wine knowledge, but also imparts an in-depth understanding of the profession of sommelier, a wine expert trained and specialized in the art of selecting, storing and serving wines. It addresses topics such as the definition of sommelier, the importance of sommeliers in the wine industry, basic wine knowledge, tasting techniques, wine pairing, wine presentation and service, wine labels and legal regulations, and viticulture and grape varieties. It also provides a detailed overview of common wine pairings and emphasizes the importance of keeping up to date with the latest trends and innovations in the wine industry.

level 1 sommelier exam: Leary's Global Wineology Charlie Leary, PhD, MA, 2022-11-15 This is the only complete guide to wine education programs, classes, and scholarship. Those wishing to increase their understanding and appreciation of wine for personal enjoyment or social know-how, and those who desire to pursue or advance a professional career in the wine industry now confront a plethora of wine education options with a confusing array of titles, degrees, certificates, and specializations. Some wine education is free and short, while other programs can cost dearly in time and money. Some courses of study take a few hours and others a few years. Institutions offering wine education vary from state colleges and universities to non-profit organizations and many profit-seeking companies. Sommeliers require training that may be mostly useless to vintners. Someone who wants to deftly handle ordering wine in a restaurant probably doesn't want to learn about wine chemistry or Integrated Pest Management. Which program is right for you? What's the difference between an MS and an MW or an MS in viticulture? Is the education for a CWE the same as that for a WSET Diploma? Are some schools better for learning about wine journalism than the wine business? This book will help answer such questions. There are chapters on wine studies programs and credentials, including for sommeliers and those working in the wine trade; university viticulture and enology programs; wine business study programs; free online wine education courses; wine studies scholarships; and wine mentorship programs. Advance Praise for Leary's Global Wineology: This groundbreaking book on wine education will be useful to business owners as well as wine enthusiasts. When I bought my wine business, I looked far and wide for guidance on classes or programs to strengthen my wine knowledge. Nothing existed. It was an arduous task to figure out which course to take amongst the so many offered! Charlie Leary has now filled that gap. It will be useful to me not only in assessing candidates for employment, but also as a resource in training my staff. This guide is indispensable for anyone in the wine trade, writ large, and has lots of information of use to the general wine-drinking public who want to learn more. Sajive Jain, Owner of Bottle Barn, Sonoma, California

level 1 sommelier exam: Wine Sales and Distribution Paul Wagner, John C. Crotts, Byron Marlowe, 2019-06-15 This definitive book offers the first focused guide for developing personal wine-selling skills. The authors' approach is based on a clear understanding of the principles, strategies, and practices used by leading wine professionals. Step by step, the authors explain how to develop relationships, understand customer needs, and deliver both products and sales presentations in an efficient and effective way. Based on the authors' over six decades of combined research, consulting, and teaching in personal selling skills, the book draws on their countless interviews and interactions with effective sales professionals in the wine and broader hospitality

industries. Many of their ideas have been incorporated into the unique consultative selling skills framework they develop in this manual. The strategies they outline will be invaluable for all those seeking to start or enhance a career in wine sales. For anyone who wishes to pursue a career in the wine industry, whether their focus is distribution, retail sales, sommelier sales at a restaurant, or working in a winery tasting room, this book will be an invaluable launching point.

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level 1 sommelier exam: 60 - Minute Wine Expert: Taste Wine the Master's Way Master Sommelier Randa Warren, 2018-08-10 When it comes to wine, a Master Sommelier teaches: • Tasting wine like a pro • Food and wine pairing • Basics of wine etiquette • Proper opening of the bottle and correct glassware • Best temperatures to serve wine Randa Warren is one of 249 professionals worldwide to be a Master Sommelier. She is one of only 25 females in the world with this distinction. A Certified Wine Educator, she also achieved a WSET Level 4 Diploma from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. Master Warren teaches wine classes in Tulsa, Oklahoma and speaks nationwide on how to become a 60-minute wine expert. With this book, she brings a simple, yet professional approach to understanding the basics of wine and wine tasting. www. randawarren.com

level 1 sommelier exam: Culinary Careers Rick Smilow, Anne E. McBride, 2010-05-04 Recommended for readers seeking a thorough introductory exposure to today's professional possibilities in the culinary world.—Eric Petersen, Kansas City P.L., MO, Library Journal Turn a passion for food into the job of a lifetime with the insider advice in Culinary Careers. Working in food can mean cooking on the line in a restaurant, of course, but there are so many more career paths available. No one knows this better than Rick Smilow—president of the Institute of Culinary Education (ICE), the award-winning culinary school in New York City—who has seen ICE graduates go on to prime jobs both in and out of professional kitchens. Tapping into that vast alumni network and beyond, Culinary Careers is the only career book to offer candid portraits of dozens and dozens of coveted jobs at all levels to help you find your dream job. Instead of giving glossed-over, general descriptions of various jobs, Culinary Careers features exclusive interviews with both food-world luminaries and those on their way up, to help you discover what a day in the life is really like in your desired field. • Get the ultimate in advice from those at the very pinnacle of the industry, including Lidia Bastianich, Thomas Keller, and Ruth Reichl. • Figure out whether you need to go to cooking school or not in order to land the job you want. • Read about the inspiring—and sometimes unconventional—paths individuals took to reach their current positions. • Find out what employers look for, and how you can put your best foot forward in interviews. • Learn what a food stylist's day on the set of a major motion picture is like, how a top New York City restaurant publicity firm got off the ground, what to look for in a yacht crew before jumping on board as the chef, and so much more. With information on educational programs and a bird's-eye view of the industry, Culinary Careers is a must-have resource for anyone looking to break into the food world, whether you're a first-time job seeker or a career changer looking for your next step.

level 1 sommelier exam: How to Launch Your Wine Career Liz Thach, Ph.D., Written by successful and respected industry professionals, How to Launch Your Wine Career gives practical, real-world advice on how to land, develop, and succeed in a career in wine making and production, vineyard management, marketing and sales, public relations, writing, education, winery management and administration, direct-to-consumer sales, and more. Featuring interviews with some of wine's most prominent figures—including winemaker Heidi Barrett and wine writer James Laube of Wine Spectator—the book builds a career from the ground up, explaining job descriptions, educational and skill requirements, the career ladder, how to get started, and job hunting strategies.

Each chapter ends with a helpful resource guide of available conferences, books, and websites. The appendix provides a detailed action plan worksheet to help the prospective applicant plan, plot progress, and nail that killer wine industry job.

level 1 sommelier exam: If Wine Could Talk Kara Joseph, 2021-09-21 A sommelier recounts her unconventional education in the world of wine in this informative memoir and guide. Unlike most soon-to-be college graduates, Kara Joseph was fascinated by wine. It had nothing to do with the penny wine nights at the local pub. There was something about wine that she couldn't explain. It called to her. It brought people together. That beguiling sense of mystery led her to become a sommelier, taking on Napa Valley and New York City, and finding the answers in wine she desperately yearned to discover. Kara's journey into the world of wine brought adventures, struggles, and an insatiable desire to understand why wine was more than just a drink. IfWine Could Talk interweaves Kara's personal story with answers to all your wine questions. Follow Kara's challenging but rewarding path as she shares the soul of the vine. Pour yourself a glass and begin your own journey of discovering the wonders and subtle delights of wine.

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level 1 sommelier exam: <u>Blood From a Stone</u> Adam S. McHugh, 2022-10-11 This is the story of how wine brought me back from the dead. Join Adam McHugh as he ends one career and discovers a new life in wine among the grapevines of the Santa Ynez Valley of California. This memoir takes you

on Adam's journey toward new life and healing through the good gifts of wine, friendship, and a sense of place.

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level 1 sommelier exam: Power Entertaining Eddie Osterland, 2012-09-25 Master the art of entertaining and cement lasting business relationships in the process You're at a fancy downtown restaurant for dinner with a million-dollar business deal on the table. The waiter hands you the wine list. Now what? So much for that shiny M.B.A. and your powerful business connections. What matters right now, at this moment, is your wine IQ—and your ability to entertain this client in a way he'll never forget. In Power Entertaining Eddie Osterland, Master Sommelier, and America's foremost wine and food coach outlines dozens of power entertaining tips that can make anyone a more effective host or hostess—be it at a corporate business event or private dinners with clients in restaurants. When it comes to hosting big business meetings or important sales events, you will discover how to entertain business clients and business associates with ease, knowledge, and confidence, using good wine and food as the ingredients to build strong and lasting business relationships. Teaches how to transform boring business meetings and sales functions into memorable social events that people will want to attend again and again Enables you to build long-term business relationships based on the time-honored principles of courtesy, generosity and old world hospitality Learn how to convince the restaurant's Maitre d' to give them the best table in the house—even on a busy Friday or Saturday night Success is always in the details, so master the finer points of entertaining before your next big business event.

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level 1 sommelier exam: California Suits Books 1-3 Claire Marti, 2024-06-24 Welcome to California Love and Luxury This collection features the first three stories in the award-winning

California Suits series. The books follow the adventures of five best friends who open a string of luxury boutique hotels from La Jolla to Monterey to Beverly Hills as each one finds true love...usually where he least expects it. Book 1: Hotel King-Enemies to Lovers/Workplace Romance When hotel entrepreneur Ryan Michaels is forced to hire his former nemesis Charlotte "Charlie" Ray, his careful plans start to unravel. Neither Ryan nor Charlie can deny the fierce attraction sizzling between them. But everyone knows not to mix business and pleasure. Don't they? Book 2: Wine Country King Brother's Best Friend/Forced Proximity Romance He's her brother's best friend. There's only one bed. Will one kiss change everything? Jack Cassidy's working with his best friend's baby sister to open the second California Suits hotel, this time in Paso Robles wine country. The only problem? Campbell Taylor, aspiring Master Sommelier, has crushed on Jack since high school and now they're forced to share an apartment. Can they resist the simmering heat building between them? Book 3: Monterey King Second Chance/Military Hero Romance A grumpy scarred veteran. A sunny wedding planner. A second chance at love? When former Army Major Cameron Taylor comes home a hero, his scars run deep - both physically and emotionally. But he's starting over, opening the third California Suits hotel in Monterey. Lucy Goodwin never stopped loving her high school sweetheart, Cam, even when he left her "for her own good" all those years ago. Now they're working together and can't resist the very real feelings they still have for each other. Can they overcome the past and finally find their happily ever after? Each California Suits love story can be read as a standalone. Each book contains one couple's story. However, they are best read in order to get full enjoyment of each story.

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